

***AN EXAMINATION OF THE 100 AAMSA
AS IT COMPARES TO OTHER
MENTORING /AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE SCHOOL PROGRAMS***

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the 100 African American Men Saturday Academy(AAMSA) program, as it was implemented during the academic school year, 1992. Through the use of parents, youth, and mentor survey's taken during this time period, an examination will be done of the Saturday Academy. From the analysis, a clear picture will emerge as to what improvements or changes, if any , need to be made to the curriculum and program of the Saturday Academy.

A comparison will then take place between the 100 AAMSA and other mentoring programs and African American culture schools as presented in the academic literature. Displaying how the Academy adopts segments of each, and incorporate them into its own special program, demonstrating how the Saturday Academy is actually a combination of the two programs.

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BACKGROUND

¹ In recent years the media, elected officials, and others have described the plight of the African American male in St. Paul as: "endangered," "dangerous," "valueless," "extinct," and "at risk."³ It became apparent that unless someone did something soon, there would be little hope in saving African American males, and the African American family, and the African American community from destruction. After coming face to face with these observations and descriptions concerning African American youth, the 100 African American Men decided that it needed to do something. After much discussion and some negotiation, the organization decided that it would create a Saturday Academy that would inspire self-confidence, teach Afrocentric values, and nurture the developmental of an entrepreneurial spirit--all occurring in a setting with successful African American adult males.²

The Academy had a twofold mission. It would help strengthen the preparation of young African American males to be responsible, successful, self-directed, and self-assured young men.³ The Academy would also provide the opportunity for African American men to help usher adolescent African American males into adulthood.⁴ The concerns raised by community professionals, community residents, and youth regarded youth knowing more about themselves and their history; basis for the implementation of Afrocentricity, the need to have jobs; basis for implementation of entrepreneurship, and the need for youth to have more to do; basis for implementation of culture/leisure opportunity.

100 African American Men also saw the need to help youth understand that they are a part of something larger than themselves.⁵ As a result, they are responsible for things outside themselves. The organizations wanted to emphasize to youth that the most important part of being successful was preparation. With these issues and concerns, a curriculum was designed that focused on Afrocentric values, Entrepreneurship, service learning, culture/leisure opportunities and career exploration.⁶

The Academy met on every non-holiday Saturday beginning on October 1, 1992 and continued through May 29, 1993. Youth met with from one to five mentors, using blocks of time ranging from one to two hours. Most often the schedule was: 8:45-10:15 Afrocentric instruction and 10:16-12:00 noon Entrepreneurial instruction. The first five to eight minutes of the Saturday Academy was devoted to

libation, which was the spiritual prayer portion of the Academy's curriculum. All Career Exploration activities occurred during the academy or Saturday afternoons. Culture/Leisure opportunities occurred throughout the week including Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The Youth also participated in numerous community-wide activities such as the celebration of the Kwanza principles and the birthday of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.⁷

Over 125 youth from 115 households were involved in the Saturday Academy from October 2, 1992 through May 29, 1993. Youth came from throughout the Metropolitan Area. Over one half of the youth were from the Central High School District, and at least one youth from every middle school or junior high school attended the Saturday Academy.⁸

Over 12 culture/leisure activities were offered to the youth. The activities ranged in attendance from 12 to 35 youth for a Timberwolves game to 14 youth in attendance for a trip to the Walker Art Center. The largest attendance was on November 11, 1992, with 43 youth in attendance for a Vikings game.⁹

A little over 50 youth participated in three activities exclusive of culture leisure activities. Camp Sunrise, was a year-end camping experience that completed some of the bonding that occurred during the academy. Mack Daddy was a workshop put together by the African American Consortium on Teen Pregnancy Prevention, which challenged youth to confront their attitudes about sexual activity and gender. Har Mar and Unidale Mall Sales Trips, were the sites where youth set up shop to sell their own products ranging from sweatshirts to calculators.¹⁰

Nearly 41 African American Men served as a discussion leader at least once during the year. A solid 25 men could be considered "regulars," meaning those in attendance of the Academy sessions including officers, board members, and sponsors. Nearly one third of all Mentors and 25% of the "regulars" resided in Minneapolis. Mentors came from all walks of life including judges, lawyers, public servants, teachers, and a city councilman.¹¹

A number of partnerships were forged throughout the year. Northern State Power provided tickets to athletic events, as part of the culture/leisure activities. Junior Achievement of Minnesota provided the course materials, many of the company products, and training for the entrepreneurial portion

of the Academy. The State of Minnesota Lottery assisted 100 AAM in the area of resource development. Saint Paul Public Schools provided 100 AAM with assistance in reaching the parents of African American youth from grades six through eight, and allowed for the use of Central High School for the Saturday Academy and provided a liaison and a student assistant. The Saint Paul League, as the fiscal agent, provided assistance in the area of budget preparation, budget management, and managerial assistance.¹²

In its first year of existence the 100 African American Men Saturday Academy played a role in the lives of over 100 African American youth. It involved over 40 African American Men in meaningful activities with youth. 100 AAM did not do it alone either, but with the help of many partnership organizations that had not been involved in the community in the past. The Academy expects to build on its accomplishments in the past by improving the quality of the program for another successful year.¹³

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that were raised for this study, were deemed relevant for the planning of the upcoming 100 AAMSA session. How successful was the 100 AAMSA in getting regular attendance and involvement from its members, would provide insight as to what extent the Academy was able to get regular involvement from its men and youth in the Academy process. The question that asks should the Academy extend its hours every Saturday, or simply meet more often, would let the Academy know how long and how often the men and youth would be willing to meet on Saturdays. The question asking should the Academy improve or change any of its activities, according to the respondents, and what activities, if any should be added is actually a combined question. It asks if any changes should be made in the curriculum, and if so, what changes would the members like to see added. The final question to be answered wants to know whether the respondent is more or less likely to return to the 100 AAMSA.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Little knowledge exists about preventive programs targeting black boys who experience a range of problems from school failure and unemployment, to drug addiction, crime, and murder. The major public policies targeting young black men are new prisons and mandatory sentencing. These have resulted in rising rates of incarceration, but no improvement in the socioeconomic status of black men.

Since nothing was being done nationally to address the prevention of such problems, an agenda to research and conceptualize programs and strategies that address these problems through long term solutions was conceived by Ronald B. Mincy and Susan J. Weiner.(Mincy and Wiener, 1991) A program model was created by Mincy and Weiner, described in the research paper, "A Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model for Helping Underclass Youth." The model uses three components: mentors, peer groups, and incentives(MPI), to improve the life chances of adolescent males in socially distressed communities.

A mentor, in this study, is an adult who uses some functional activity(or activities) to establish a caring and trusting relationship with one or more youth and uses that relationship to ease transitions to adulthood. Some programs use activities to cement the mentor-protégé relationship, from sports activities to conversations about goals, obstacles, and strategies for attaining them. The mentors then serve as guides to the youth as they take actions consistent with their goals in life.

All mentors, despite the different mentoring programs, use mentor protege relationships to assist youth with a wide range of challenges. Simba Wachanga of Cleveland serves as guidance for Male African American children in their passage to manhood. The Simba Rites of Passage Program is predicated on Nguzo Saba or seven principles, which are as follows: Umoja(unity), Kujichagiula(self-determination), Ujima(collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa(cooperative economics), Nia(purpose), Kuumba(creativity), and Imani(faith). This program provides the youth a smooth transition into a world of larger responsibility, privileges, institutions, and understandings.(Hill, 1992)

The HAWK Federation of Sacramento reinforces the African tradition while emphasizing positive black manhood at the same time. The HAWK project stimulates in its youth the desire to become

high achievers and the best at whatever they do. It aims at developing in each youth: something which he does exceptionally well; a belief that whatever the task, he can be successful at it; and an awareness of the historical greatness of African and African American men and their personal responsibility to the future continuation of that greatness.(Nobles, 1989)

The 100 AAMSA emphasizes many of the same beliefs and methods as the HAWK Federation of Sacramento, and would appear to be an extension of it. The 100 African American Men Saturday Academy(AAMSA) utilizes rituals, practices, and responsibility in the preparation of young African American Males in their transition to adulthood. The Academy incorporates religion in the form of libation, which is a traditional ceremonial prayer that begins every Saturday Academy session: From there the Academy goes into its Afrocentric portion of the session, which is a study of the world, its people, concepts, and history from the perspective of an African person. This lasts about an hour, followed by another one hour session of instruction in entrepreneurialship. In this session the youth learn what it is like to run a company, develop and sell products, and what it means to make a profit. The youth experience this first hand by developing companies to make and sell products on their own.

The Entrepreneurial portion of the Academy is one of the unique aspects of this youth program. It is the hope of the 100 African American Men, by instilling in these young men the idea of creating and running their own business one day, that any one of them may become Black Business Owners some day. In doing this, the Academy is not only implementing in the minds of the youth the need to own businesses, but providing the community with very much needed black businessmen. If only one out of every youth taking part in the Saturday Academy program each year became a black business owner, then the 100 AAMSA has achieved a successful program.

The Academy borrows, however, the Afrocentric portion of its curriculum from the African American Culture Schools and the Immersion Schools. The common goal of both schools is to connect the total schooling experience to African/African American heritage.(Leake and Leake, 1992). Afrocentricity provides all Americans a chance to examine the African perspective in this society and the world.

It has been argued by educators that Afrocentricity is anti-white, thereby creating a segregationists attitude towards learning. Afrocentricity is not anti-white but instead, it is pro-human.(Asante) By providing philosophical and theoretical guidelines and criteria centered on an African perception, and by placing the African American child in his or her proper historical setting, Afrocentricity is believed to possibly be the "escape hatch" needed to insure academic success and to move away from the ongoing cycle of miseducation and dislocation.(Asante, 1991)

Today's educators believe that because of the lack of historical facts that accurately recognize the contributions of Africans and African Americans in history, many youth, black and white, male and female have a distorted view of African Americans. Being that most elementary school teachers are female, providing few male role models, theorists are beginning to support the notion of special schools for black males, like the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. African Immersion Elementary School and Robert L. Fulton Middle School. The 100 AAMSA implements an Afrocentric theme, with an even greater emphasis coming from the perspective of an African American Male, educating African American Youth.

The 100 AAMSA's Afrocentric learning session is conducted by African American men. This should be an essential part of the African American youth learning experience, which the youth are not receiving in school. So this part of their learning experience is supplemented in a small way by the Saturday Academy. The youth learn African/African American history in an informal setting from an African American Male perspective.

Aside from the different learning experiences received by the youth of the 100 AAMSA. A more important aspect of the 100 AAMSA that all youth will carry with them is that all youth visualized firsthand, the positive roles of African American Males, from judges and lawyers to teachers and dentists. This is something that the African American youth do not see enough of. What the 100 African American Men want the youth to take away from their experience at the Saturday Academy is that each one of them can become whatever he wants, and that there are many options out there other than those that lie in our inner city streets.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review, which was compiled from numerous sources pertaining to the subject of African American Mentoring Programs and Mentoring programs, revealed common goals of all such programs. Most of the mentoring programs studied target African American inner city youth between the ages of ten and sixteen. A couple of the programs tend to take in youth a few years younger than ten as well. The socioeconomic group targeted throughout the literature was the underclass, under privileged, and deprived youth of our urban areas. African American males are the most commonly targeted gender of all studies.

The African American male youth population has been labeled by these literary sources as "at risk," meaning that they are the group most likely to get hooked on drugs, involved in gangs, and end up dead by the age of 25. It is for this reason that this particular group of individuals have been targeted by most youth development programs. It is the belief, that by targeting this particular age group of young black youth, the youth development programs have a much better chance at possibly preventing such "at risk" conditions plaguing the African American male population. Attempting to provide prevention after many youth have already decided what path they were going to take, would leave little that the youth programs could do at this point.

The common goal of prevention of "at risk" conditions in the African American male community is indeed shared by all programs. Only the methods by which the different programs attempt to accomplish this goal differ, for instance, the HAWK Federation of Sacramento aims at developing in each youth, something which he does exceptionally well; a belief that whatever the task, he can be successful at it; and an awareness of the historical greatness of African and African American men and their responsibility to the future continuation of that greatness. (Nobles) The Spirit of Excellence, a comprehensive tutorial program is designed to improve the academic skills and self esteem of African American Youth and help them to achieve. The list of different programs and their different methods does go on, in order to see the rest of the mentoring programs simply refer to the Annotated Bibliography.

The literature compiled from numerous sources based on the subject of African American Culture Schools and Immersion Schools revealed a common goal, as well as methods shared by all such schools in

existence. It is believed that because of the lack of historical facts describing the contributions made by blacks in history, many children, black and white, male and female, have a distorted view of black people. Therefore, the simplest form of remedy to the situation is the implementation of a curriculum with an afrocentric theme.

Afrocentricity is a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. This means that teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African world view.(Asante) Although the Immersion schools are open to all races, their target group of African American male youth still make up the majority of the schools. Regardless of the variety of ethnic backgrounds of youth enrolled, Afrocentricity remains as the dominant theme of all schools. It is the belief shared by all Immersion school's that one's self identity, which is ultimately one's cultural ideality; and without a strong cultural identity, one is lost.(Asante) Afrocentricity provides all Americans a chance to examine the African perspective in this society as well as the rest of the world.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS-METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the 100 African American Saturday Academy process, as it was perceived by the parents, mentors, and youth involved in the academy for the 1992 to 1993 school year. Each group was given a specific questionnaire of open and closed ended questions. Each was asked their feelings about the Academy and if they saw any need for improvement or changes. Survey results were used to answer research questions for the purpose of this paper, but also for guidelines to follow in planning the Saturday Academy's program for this coming fall. All data acquired from the questionnaires' can only be used in the examination of the Saturday Academy process itself. Any inquiries towards the long term effect of the 100 AAMSA on its youth would require extensive study and follow up five to ten years after completion of the program. For the purposes of this paper, the following data that is presented, pertains strictly to the research questions.

This study was limited to only those individuals who actively participated in the Saturday Academy from October 1992 to May 1993. Out of over 100 youth, 55 could be considered regulars, of which 34 took part in the Academy survey. Of the 45 parents with children regularly attending the academy, 24 took part in the survey. There were only 25 mentors that could be considered regulars out of an original number of 43, and out of that 25, 21 mentors and members took part in the year end survey.

One of the first questions asked of the participants was how many sessions of the Saturday Academy did they miss. Of those that answered, the percentage that only missed one or two sessions was: 63.6% of the mentors and 55.9% of the youth. The percentage of parents agreeing with the youth was 45.8%. Those answering that they missed no sessions were 11.8% of the youth, (with 12.5% of the parents in agreement), and 9.1% of the mentors present at all sessions. Those respondents missing three or four sessions were 29.4% of the youth, with 29.1% of the parents in agreement, and only 18.2% of the mentors responding that they missed three of four sessions.

There were varied responses as to how often the Academy should meet and for how long. The youth, by a 50% response, prefer the Academy meet every other Saturday with a cultural/leisure activity or career exploration scheduled during the off week, and 47.1% wanting the meetings to last only two hours. The majority of parents and mentors seemed to agree the academy should continue meeting every non-

holiday Saturday from three to three and a half hours. 31.8% of the mentors and 45.8% of the parents wanted three hours. 31.8% of the mentors and 37.5% of the parents wanted the Academy to extend its sessions to three and a half hours.

As far as the Saturday Academy curriculum goes, 36.4% of the mentors felt it should remain the same and 31.8% felt that math instruction should be added to the curriculum. The youth responded by 32.4% , for the addition of computers and 29.4% felt that arts and crafts should be added. The majority of parents agreed that computer instruction should be added to the curriculum, then math and arts and crafts consecutively. Only 14.7% of the youth and 20.8% of the parents felt the curriculum was fine the way it existed now.

When asked whether or not they would return to the Academy next year, 47.1% of the youth answered yes, 32.4% answered no, and 20.6% were not sure. However, the parents responded by 83.3% that their children would return, 4.2% believed they would not, and 12.5% were not sure. Of the mentors that responded to the question, 50% answered yes they would return, 18.2% answered no, and 4.5% were not sure.

The data show that the 100 AAMSA was successful in getting regular attendance from over half of its mentors and youth. There was however, a lot of disparity as far as when and how long the Academy should be in session. The concern of the youth was particularly based upon the fact that the Academy resembled school too much, and no child their age wants to be sitting in school on a Saturday morning. This was also a concern of the mentors and members, to get away from the schoolroom atmosphere that the Academy had adopted. It is definitely something needs consideration, when setting the agenda and schedule for the upcoming Saturday Academy session. Many of the youth also cited the Academy's resemblance to the classroom as the reason they would not return, unless this was changed in the Academy criteria. The youth also wanted the addition of more activities, specifically computer instruction and arts and crafts. The parents seemed to agree, in addition to these, that more life skills training be offered in the curriculum to better prepare youth for their transition to adulthood.

CONCLUSIONS - RECOMMENDATIONS

Ronald B. Mincy, author of Nurturing Young Black Males, suggests that Youth Development programs serving young black males should be considered as alternatives to treatment and prevention programs. Instead of putting all present service dollars into treatment, prevention, and incarceration, without knowing the effectiveness of such programs, investment should be made of our service dollars to develop and test youth development programs.¹⁴

Youth service in America tends to proceed along two separate tracks. Private programs funded by middle and upper class parents of all race and ethnic groups with the will, means, and knowledge to engage non-family resources on behalf of their children emphasize preparation for adulthood. Publicly funded programs tend to emphasize prevention and treatment for troubled youth.¹⁵ Youth from families and communities unable to support private youth development programs, are, at best, programs developed in order to prevent specific delinquent behavior. Other developmental needs of these youth go substantially unmet. American society for the most part, has left disadvantaged youth on their own to discover who they are and how they should relate to others.¹⁶

The most fundamental goals of youth development programs are to help early adolescents meet their basic needs, master competence critical for successful transitions to adulthood, and establish critical connections to others.¹⁷ Courtland C. Lee, an associate professor and director of the Counselor Education Program at University of Virginia, argues that Youth Development Programs for Black Males(YDPBM) should provide opportunities for youth to develop ongoing relationships with successful black males. Programs should also allow young black males to learn and practice skills for overcoming developmental obstacles that are common to youth in low income black neighborhoods such as pervasive crime, violence, drug use and sales, and early sexual encounters.¹⁸

Lee and Jane Quinn, program director at the Dewitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund, argue that YDPBM should accept and apply African/African American Cultural principles in the same way that programs targeting majority youth routinely incorporate Eurocentric cultural principles. Quinn suggests the need for YDPBM extended to seven days a week, instead of just a few hours once a week.¹⁹ This would

compensate for the many hours during which young black males are idle or are exposed to negative peer pressure. However, resources are not available to provide for such expansion.

The largest weakness of current YDPBM is the lack of existing agencies to coordinate with other agencies to provide services to young black males. No single program can be expected to meet the needs of all young black males. Youth may benefit even more from services and opportunities in a variety of settings and from a number of service providers.

African American Males have been referred to as "endangered species." It is important for every American group to be able to function productively, the problems of African American males must be a concern of all Americans. Therefore, new programs for African American males must be tested and implemented monthly. Early evidence suggests much success of mentoring programs, but it is too early to know the long term value of these programs and approaches. Since most programs involve several simultaneous interventions, it will not be easy to determine which components are most effective. Meanwhile the continued implementation of such programs will continue to provide alternatives to youth along with guidance and support, traits that are lacking and very much needed in the youth of today.

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Hirsch states that no matter what the curriculum, all children need to have basic foundations and share common points of reference that will enable further learning. The general consensus growing across this nation, shared throughout all facets of education is that school based knowledge should be (especially in history and literature) far more multicultural than it has been in the past.

Multiculturalism comes in different phases. There is a progressive form that will be helpful to all students, and a retrogressive form that not only tends to set group against group, but also hinders the educational excellence and fairness it was conceived to enhance. The multicultural movement in the United States is at heart a demand for redefinition of American school based culture, specifically a demand to change the history and literature curriculum. This arose in reconstitution of American society after the civil rights movement, and as a consequence of new waves of Asian and Latino immigration. Even after our schools have included many more elements of African, African-American, Native American, Asian, and Latino culture, we still face the task of providing all children a high quality education.(1992)

Wheelan, Belle S., Making Public Education Work for Black Males.

Educators today believe that because of the lack of historical facts describing the contributions blacks have made to American history, many children, black and white, male and female, have a distorted view of black people. Since most elementary school teachers are female, providing few male role models, theorists are beginning to support the notion of special schools for black males. Thereby, the only means of a remedy to the situation is the implementation of a curriculum with an Afrocentric theme.

Our public school system must take a risk and change its modes of teaching. We must rekindle that sense of taking responsibility for ourselves and our possessions and not depending on others, or the material things in our lives determining our self-worth. We must help our children develop appropriate values and to value appropriate things.(1991)

Nobles, Wade, HAWK Federation.

On almost every indicator of socio-economic well being the Black male lags far behind almost every other sex and ethnic group in the country. The Black male has a lower life expectancy rate than any other sex and ethnic group. The Black prison population is made up of 89% Black males. Educational data reflect that Black Youth, in general, are scoring consistently below the national average across all grade levels and subjects, and are not well prepared for entry into college. Drugs, youth gangs, violence, victimization, and crime are increasingly becoming everyday life experiences of Black Males. Black male sexual misconduct and other health risks are both major problems as well, currently African Americans (mostly males) represent 25% of AIDS cases, but only 12% of the national population.

The sole mission of the Hawk training program is to develop competent, confident, and conscious African American Men, through a process of introducing the young men to the qualities, attributes, attitudes, and responsibilities of African and African American Men of Excellence. The HAWK process aims at developing in each youth, something which he does exceptionally well (competence); a belief that whatever the task, he can be successful at it (confidence); and an awareness of the historical greatness of African and African American men and their responsibility to the future continuation of that greatness (consciousness). It is a universal prevention-intervention programme that addresses simultaneously the problems of drugs, gang violence, academic failure, low aspirations, poor self-esteem, and inappropriate sexual behavior.

In the education of these young Black males, the Hawk Project attempted to realign them to a value and belief system which was consistent with the positive nature of African people. By reinforcing the positive attributes of Black manhood, the Hawk Federation program "prevents" young Black boys from being susceptible to drug involvement and deviant lifestyles. Images, symbols, regalia, rituals, practices, and responsibilities were created to help internalize positive Black manhood as represented by High Achievement, Wisdom, and Knowledge. The young men in this program have, as a result of participating in this program, internalized a "no drug use" philosophy along with goals of becoming competent, confident, and conscious Black Men. The positive results of this training project, suggests that this program should be tested and replicated on a larger scale.(1989)

Hill, Paul Jr., *Passage to Manhood: Rearing the Male African American Child.*

In some cultures, the final entrance into adulthood is marked as it has been from times past, by the coming of age ceremony. The coming of age ceremony finds the individual at a new point within the surrounding community. It is a critical moment of expansion, the entrance into a world of larger responsibilities, larger privileges, larger secrets, larger institutions, and larger understandings. It amounts to a second birth; not entry into physical life, but into the higher life of culture and spirit.

Simba Wachanga Cleveland, where this study is based, comes from the African dictum "Man know yourself; and the principle of 'I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am. The Simba Rites of Passage Program is predicated on the Nguzo Saba or Seven Principle. The Nguzo Saba are the moral minimum value system Black people need in order to rescue and reconstruct their history and humanity, their daily lives, in their own image and interests. The seven principles of Simba Wachanga are: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), Imani (faith).

This process provides a socio-cultural frame of reference for the implementation of a transitional process to adulthood. The process provides formal recognition to establish the social status, social roles, and social responsibilities of African-American males as men. The Simba Wachanga Rites of Passage process is an opportunity to develop and nurture that much needed generation of African American male youth as future providers, mates, and protectors.(1987)

The Spirit of Excellence. Each One, Reach One.

There is a growing recognition of educational needs beyond those filled by the public school system. Middle class families often supplement their children's education with private tutors, test training workshops, and summer enrichment programs. Disadvantaged children, however, rarely receive extra assistance or encouragement. So in 1988 the National Black Child Development Institute created Each One, Reach One: The Spirit of Excellence, a comprehensive tutorial program designed to improve the academic skills and self-esteem of African American children and help them to achieve. Each One, Reach One, was launched initially in two national demonstration cities: Detroit, Michigan and Greensboro, North Carolina. The program was designed to utilize the whole community--its churches, civic groups, and public service organizations--to give special attention to children whose family resources are limited.

The National Black Child Development Institute's plan emphasizes five factors as critical to helping African American children achieve. First, since parents are their children's earliest teachers and role models, it is important to include the child's parents and extended family in any supplementary educational plan. Second, NBCDI recognizes that what makes a person a positive role model for children are the values he or she represents outside of the volunteer tutorial program. Third, volunteers must understand that working with disadvantaged children requires an enormous amount of personal commitment. Fourth, NBCDI has designated Each One, Reach One: The Spirit of Excellence to create a productive atmosphere for learning while avoiding the formality and rigidity that often turn children off from school. Fifth, an educational plan for African American children must emphasize the rich traditions of African culture.(1991)

Educating African American Males: A Dream Deferred

Out of the 5,176 African American males enrolled in Milwaukee high schools, less than 20% have cumulative grade point averages of 2.0 or higher. Although African American males make up 27.6% of the Milwaukee Public Schools students, during 1989-90 they were 50% of the students suspended. The African American Male Task Force was created by the Board of School Directors and the Superintendents in response to the declining status of African American Males schools, and society as well. Its purpose was to review current educational efforts and recommend strategies by which schools can work to reverse these trends.

The recommendations made by the task force are separated into two phases: Phase 1 for immediate implementation and Phase 2 for longer range implementation. Phase 1 includes the following: the changing of curricular policy to include more information recognizing and appreciating African American culture along with cultures of other people; students must be provided with access to more quality after school, summer, and Saturday programs; implementing strategies to increase the number of African American teachers, specifically males; all school staff should be required to take courses on African American history, culture, and racism in America and its negative impact on all Americans; the establishment of Immersion Academies at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels which will emphasize educating African American males with an Afro-centered Immersion Specialty Program. Phase 2 includes the following: restructuring schools; developing strong self-images/self-concepts among African American male students; revising curriculum in all disciplines to include true history of African Americans; enhancing family support for African American Males; increasing parents and caregivers abilities to support their children's education; increasing the involvement and support of both the African American and white communities in the education of African American Males; establishing mechanisms to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations from Phase 1 to Phase 2.(1990)

Morgan, William R. and Sandra Ezekiel, Supplementary Education for Low Income Youth: Saturday School at an African American Heritage Center.

This study is a report of a two year experiment to provide adequate supplementary education to preadolescent African American children living in a poor neighborhood of a large midwestern metropolitan area. The high crime, poverty neighborhood put the children "at risk" of not growing up to become responsible adults by conventional standards. The supplementary education involved free, voluntary classes held on Saturday mornings during the school year. Meetings were held at an African American cultural center. The Saturday Academy lessens and activities stressed the knowledge of the history and heritage of Africa. It was an assumption that such a program would allow the creation for a more African centered, bicultural or multicultural world view and provide specific African content for a positive, culture based ethnic identity. It was also hypothesized that these educational outcomes would have a positive impact on the children's regular school achievement.(1993)

Leake, Donald and Brenda Leake, African-American Immersion Schools in Milwaukee.

Immersion schools like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. African American Immersion Elementary School and Robert L. Fulton Middle School, were created in order to eliminate the institutional and attitudinal influences that tend to halt the academic success of African American students. The long range goal of the school is to prepare students to live, learn, and work in a multicultural society. Its success will be determined by how effectively the community deals with both white and black students, and by how consistently high quality education is provided to all.

Immersion schools utilize in its educational process, a social process derived from its African conception. Staffing of the school is based more on experience and teaching rather than on race or gender. Teachers in primary and middle grades stay with their classes for two and three years.

Immersion schools staff members coordinate academic and recreational programs after school and on Saturdays. Mentors are gathered from both professional and blue-collar occupations, and volunteer their time to provide each classroom with a network of involved adults who guide, support, and advise students. A parent outreach center is also provided to offer a variety of additional family support services.(1992)

White-Hood, Marion, Taking up the Mentoring Challenge.

This project was created at the Benjamin Tasker Middle School in Prince George's County, Maryland. It began with a target group of 35 African American students, identified by teachers as academically or behaviorally in trouble. Each student was to have a role model to interact and learn from. Twenty teachers chose one or two of the students to work with. Successful mentoring required staff development, feedback, ongoing training, as well as a support group for mentors. The mentoring process was expanded in the second year to include educators from other schools, legislators, businesspeople, doctors, and scientists to participate.

Mentors would work with their students on site; tutoring and sitting in on classes, or whatever was needed to address the problems a student had. Many mentors, with parental permission, also worked with students on weekends and during evenings. They took them to cultural events, museums, or ball games, exposing them to learning experiences. By portraying themselves as individuals living up to role expectations mentors helped students grow. Students began to set goals, explore careers, and develop a future orientation, learning to relate to the real world.(1991)

Gary, Lawrence E. and Christopher B. Booker, Empowering African Americans to Achieve Academic Success.

Several experts of contemporary education believe that African American students learn better in an environment filled with human interaction and dialogue, rather than the passive teacher-pupil form of instruction. African American students must receive more individualized attention. Wherever mentoring programs do not exist, efforts should be made to establish such programs. All youth tend to benefit from the assistance, guidance, and support of a qualified mentor. A mentor can provide more individualized attention to the students problems, help a youngster develop a sense of self-confidence, and encourage positive risk taking and assertiveness. The student is encouraged to think early about long range career and personal goals.(1992)

Leake, Donald and Brenda L. Leake, Islands of Hope: Milwaukee's African American Immersion Schools.

In the common urban school environment, minority students are expected to learn in an environment that disregards their home language, denies their historical existence, and demeans their culture (Nieto, 1992; Hale-Benson,1982). The goal of the African American Immersion School is to develop a setting that systematically and consciously connects the total schooling experience to African/African American heritage. A review of literature and research on gender-related interest patterns suggest that same sex classroom arrangements are beneficial for certain school activities and need to be incorporated into the school day. The focus of such classes would be to help students examine and establish personally and culturally appropriate notions of femininity or masculinity. Although the Immersion schools would be open to all students in Milwaukee's public school district regardless of race, they would primarily provide academically challenging, African/African American culture intensive experiences for African American students (particularly males).(1992)

Asante, Molefi Keto, The Afrocentric Idea in Education.

Afrocentricity is a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. In education this means that the teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African world view. One's basic identity is one's self identity, which is ultimately one's cultural ideality; without a strong cultural identity, one is lost. Afrocentricity provides all Americans a chance to examine the African perspective in this society and the world. Afrocentricity is not anti-white; but instead, it is pro-human. By providing philosophical and theoretical guidelines and criteria centered in an African perspective and by placing the African American child in his or her proper historical setting, Afrocentricity may possibly be the "escape hatch" needed to insure academic success and to move away from the ongoing cycle of miseducation and dislocation.(1991)

Mincy, Ronald B, A Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model for Helping Underclass Youth..

Increasing crime and drug abuse among males in under class areas is due to changes in economic structure, family structure, and increasing segregation. Declining earnings have reduced the status of older men in the community, who maintained mainstream work and family patterns. Because of declining economic status, these men became less appealing role models for younger men. So instead of working two jobs, younger men would supplement their low wage earnings by selling drugs. Stiffer penalties then gave adult drug dealers stronger incentives to recruit younger boys into the business. As a result, high schools and junior high schools have become bigger drug markets. In highly segregated neighborhoods, drug dealers have become the role models and drug gangs have become the organized peer groups for a large number of young boys.

The mentor, peer group, and incentive program has specific behavioral goals to help reach academic outcomes they select. Full time mentors are the primary service providers. They serve protégés as intimate older friends, life skills teachers, administrators of a program of progressive behavioral change, and academic advocates. Mentors are then positioned as advocates of the protégés rather than advocates of education. Mentors use peer groups to provide academic and life skills training, and to reinforce changes in attitudes about academic achievement and responsible sexual behavior. Monetary incentives are also used by the mentors to encourage protégés to continue in the program and to set and reach long term goals. This comprehensive approach aims to counteract the combined trends of female-headed households, detachment of men from jobs and families, segregation of minorities in urban areas. The MPI vision is to teach and prepare adolescent males to become responsible adults and help reverse these trends.